

August 2, 2003

**LOW RAINFALL AND WELL LEVELS, HIGH WATER USE PROMPTS CALL FOR
VOLUNTARY IRRIGATION RESTRICTIONS**

Concerned about declining well levels at key sources, the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) is asking users to voluntarily restrict irrigation and limiting lawn and landscape watering to Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. No watering would be allowed between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

This guideline takes effect on Sunday, August 3, until further notice and applies to all government agencies, businesses and residents. The BWS is requesting that non-potable water customers and private well users also comply with the restriction in the spirit of public cooperation.

"This hot summer season, combined with a prolonged drought and relatively dry winters, have taken a toll on our island's groundwater aquifers," BWS Manager and Chief Engineer Clifford Jamile said.

"Levels at key production sites such as Kaimuki, Beretania, Kalihi, Moanalua, Halawa, Kalauao and Punalu'u are cause for concern. All of these wells are down by almost two feet since May of last year."

According to the water manager, water production figures have been exceeding the Department's five-year average for July of 165 million gallons per day (mgd) up to all-time high of 180 mgd a few weeks ago. The latest islandwide consumption report, covering the week of July 17 - 23rd, is 178 mgd.

"We need the help of every single customer - large and small - to bring these numbers back down to reasonable levels, and to keep our aquifers healthy," Jamile said.

"Our goal is to reduce overall daily demand by 10 percent," Jamile said. "We are asking all water users to help us voluntarily reduce their consumption. Cutting back on overall water demand will allow our wells to build up storage again."

"We're hoping that, through voluntary actions of each person and the cooperation of our large water users, we'll be able to avoid mandatory measures," Jamile said.

The Board is asking that installation of new lawns (which require constant irrigation) be postponed for at least two months and advises against fundraising carwashes at this time.

BWS staff will monitor the effects of voluntary conservation efforts over the next few weeks to see whether demand changes significantly enough to reduce stress of water resources. If

groundwater conditions do not change significantly, the Board may impose mandatory conservation measures.

The Board is also pursuing water conservation partnerships with various state and county agencies and large water customers to find ways to help them become more water-efficient. Jamile said that Department of Parks and Recreation Director William Balfour recently pledged the support of his staff to avoid irrigating City parks during the heat of mid-day and afternoons. Here are a few conservation tips related to irrigation for O'ahu water users:

- While adjusting automatic irrigation timers for Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, check the sprinkler system for leaks and adjust sprinkler heads to eliminate over-spray.
- Install a sub-meter on irrigation system or a point of use meter for your garden hose to measure and control how much water is used.
- Use mulch around plants and trees to reduce evaporation and maximize the use of water by the plants.
- Call the BWS Community Relations Office at 748-5041 for more water-saving ideas.

The BWS is depending upon the public's cooperation: "In the past 10 years, we've been fortunate that the public has always responded positively to our conservation appeals and curbed their water use," Jamile said.

We recognize that many residents are already doing their best to use water wisely and reducing waste," he added. "We commend all of you and ask that you please continue your efforts."